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ABSTRACT

This publication of the CDA Clearinghouse offers brief descriptive abstracts of 4 CDA programs which reflect CDA training criteria and have been judged to be usable in various programs and localities. Each abstract consists of a program overview and describes the implementation of each of the 6 CDA training criteria. The overviews discuss program administration, approach and delivery. Of the 4 programs described, 3 are university affiliated. The University of Tennessee CDA Training Program provides academic courses offered in "cluster" sessions at both the local agency and/or campus site and through field supervision. The Arkansas CDA Training Program at Arkansas State provides 100% field based, individualized, on the job training. The Westchester-Rockland Program Development Committee is not university administrated. Its field supervisors are mainly Head Start supervisory staff. The Arizona CDA Training Program at Central Arizona College has developed an individualized modular training system for the area's culturally and educationally diverse training population. Each program implements the CDA training criteria in various ways. CDA competency areas are listed and standard terms for the CDA Abstracts series are defined. (RH)

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CDA ABSTRACTS

Methods of Implementing CDA Training

Spring, 1978

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
OFFICE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
Administration for Children, Youth and Families
Head Start Bureau

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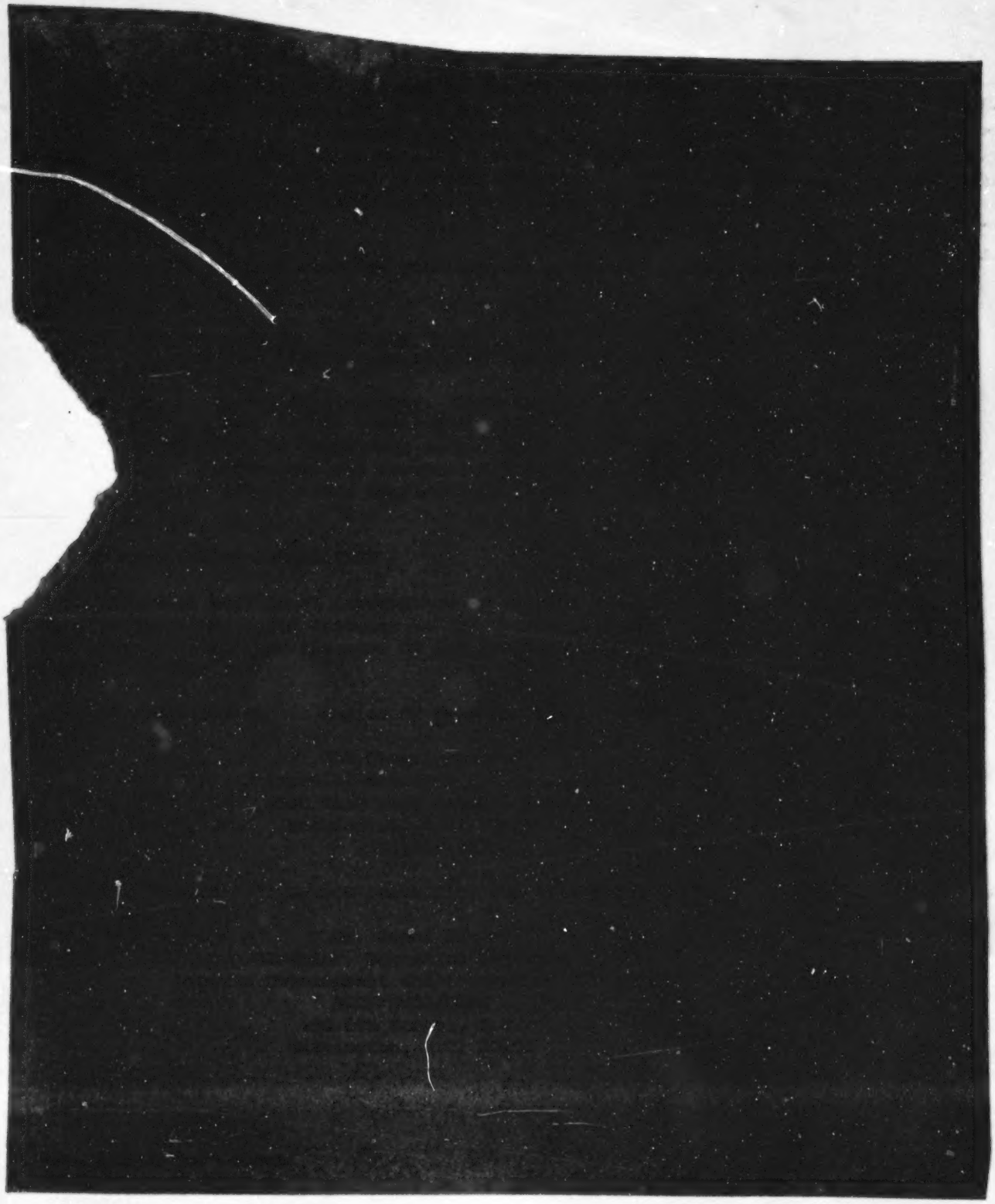

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INTRODUCTION

CDA Abstracts: Methods of Implementing CDA Training is an information exchange publication of the CDA Clearinghouse. Each abstract represents a unique approach to CDA training through implementation of the CDA Training Criteria.

Materials submitted to the CDA Clearinghouse are reviewed and analyzed for their suitability for inclusion in the CDA Abstracts. Those who submit their methods for implementing CDA training to the CDA Clearinghouse provide persons in other training programs with the opportunity to share in the development of CDA training generally, and to adapt those methods which may be useful to their own local agencies, programs, or organizations.

SELECTION OF MATERIALS

Entries contained in the CDA Abstracts represent CDA training programs that have submitted materials to the Clearinghouse. The bases upon which materials are reviewed, analyzed, and subsequently selected for inclusion in the Abstracts are the extent of their adherence to the CDA Training Criteria and the potential useability/adaptability of all or part of the methods described.

The CDA Training Criteria are training guidelines that have been formulated by the Administration for Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF). The CDA Training Criteria are as follows:

- The training should be based on the CDA Competencies and should lead to their acquisition.
- Valid credit should be offered for CDA training.
- Fifty percent or more of the intern's total training time should be spent in supervised field work.
- Academic content and field work should be an integrated set of experiences.
- Training should be individualized according to each intern's strengths and needs with respect to acquisition of the CDA Competencies.
- Training should be flexibly scheduled so that length of training time varies according to each intern's rate of acquisition of the CDA Competencies.

Useability/adaptability refers to the extent to which the program methods can be used in a variety of programs with differing philosophies, cultural and ethnic representation, delivery systems, and geographic locations.

THE CDA COMPETENCIES

Competency Area I:

Establishes and maintains a safe and healthy learning environment.

Competency Area II:

Advances physical and intellectual competence.

Competency Area III:

Builds positive self-concept and individual strength.

Competency Area IV:

Promotes positive functioning of children and adults in a group.

Competency Area V:

Brings about optimal coordination of home and center child-rearing practices and expectations.

Competency Area VI:

Carries out supplementary responsibilities related to the children's program.

Bilingual/Bicultural Training Competency #1:

Comprehends and communicates with children and adults in both Spanish and English.

Bilingual/Bicultural Training Competency #2:

Supports the child's ethnic identity and self-concept by making cultural experiences an integral part of the daily program and supplemental activities.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Authors of the training materials that appear in the CDA Abstracts have used different terms for the roles of intern and field advisor and for the training components. For the purposes of clarity and continuity, however, the following terms will be used throughout these Abstracts:

- Intern: The person in CDA competency-based training whose goal is acquisition of the CDA Credential. Comparable terms are trainee, candidate, student, etc.

- Field Advisor: The person who advises, counsels, makes recommendations to, guides, and assists interns in their field work. Comparable terms are field supervisor, field trainer, instructor, etc.

- Appraisal (pre-appraisal, exit appraisal): The process in which the training program and the intern alike make judgments regarding the intern's demonstrated competence before he or she begins training or exits from the training required in a particular module or learning package. Comparable terms are assessment, pre-assessment, exit assessment.

- Assessment, final assessment: The process in which the CDA Consortium, through its Credential Award System, makes judgments regarding the competence demonstrated by a CDA candidate for the purpose of awarding the CDA Credential.

- Indicators: Subcategories of skills related to the six CDA Competency Areas and Functional Areas. The indicators provide a basis for observations and for classifying or categorizing observations of an intern's performance within each Area.

- Personal Capacities: The patterns of relating to children identified by ACYF as essential to the CDA's ability to demonstrate the CDA Competencies. Stated as indicators these are:

  --Is sensitive to children's feelings and the qualities of young children

  --Listens to children to understand what they mean

  --Uses nonverbal means of communication and adapts adult verbal language and style to maximize communication with children

  --Protects orderliness without sacrificing childish spontaneity and exuberance

  --Is perceptive of individuality and the positive use of individual differences within the group of children

  --Exercises control without being threatening

--Is emotionally responsive, taking pleasure in children's successes and supporting them when they experience troubles and failures

--Brings humor and imaginativeness into the group situation

--Is committed to maximizing the child's and his/her family's strengths and potentials.

ABSTRACT #1

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE CDA TRAINING PROGRAM
DIVISION OF CONTINUING EDUCATION
KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Part of a comprehensive training effort to further the development of Head Start training, the CDA training program at the University of Tennessee has grown from 11 interns and three half-time advisors in 1973, to 81 interns and nine full-time advisors in 1978. CDA training staffs are currently based at all five campuses of the University: Martin, Memphis, Nashville, Chattanooga, and Knoxville.

- Administration and Management

Administration of the CDA training program is through the Division of Continuing Education, which has been contracted by the Administration for Children, Youth, and Families for both the Head Start State Training Office and the Head Start Supplementary Training/Child Development Associate training program. Because of the consistency in the overall goals of these two contracts, CDA training is operated as a joint effort within the Division. One project, or department director, works to ensure that the objectives, work programs, and staff of the two contracts complement and support each other.

- Training Approach and Delivery System

In addition to the cooperation and coordination between staffs within the Division and the two contracts, another key feature of the University of Tennessee's CDA training approach is its emphasis on the relationship between the CDA Competencies and the Head Start Performance Standards.

Training is provided through academic courses offered in "cluster" sessions at both the local agency and/or campus site--where interns from nearby agencies meet as a group--and through field supervision. Field advisors not only provide the field supervision, but also conduct the academic course cluster training, thus facilitating the integration of academic and field experiences. Each field advisor is assigned to three Head Start grantees and provides training (three days of on-site field supervision per month) for an average of three interns per grantee. Each intern is thereby provided with a one-day observation-conference per month. Since the Head Start Directors and Supervisors are an integral part of the implementation of this program, the field advisors also meet on-site with these staff members to share progress and concerns.

- Curriculum Design and Materials Development

The Division of Continuing Education, including the Center for Extended Learning, Television Services, Radio Services, Library Services, and the Teaching Materials Center, was involved in the development of courses and field training. Materials and resources for use in CDA training include an extensive library of films, filmstrips, slides, videotapes, books, pamphlets, and training packages. In addition to the 5,000 items under these categories, special orientation transparencies and a notebook of handouts related to the 13 CDA Functional Areas have also been developed. Materials are continually being revised and updated, and new materials acquired.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CDA TRAINING CRITERIA

- Training Organized According to the CDA Competencies

Specially developed academic courses offered through the Center for Extended Learning, CDA workshops, and seminars focus not only on the CDA Competencies, but also on the relationship between the Competencies and the Head Start Performance Standards.

- Valid Credit

All CDA interns are admitted to the University of Tennessee. Upon entry, the intern's work experience and non-credit training is assessed, documented, and translated into credits. This documentation is transferred to the Individualized Education Program where the credits are registered. A maximum of 45 credits is allowed under this plan.

Interns also enroll in relevant resident Center for Extended Learning Courses which are offered in local "cluster" sessions. Eight courses totaling 24 credit hours are presently available.

- Supervised Field Work

The field advisors provide on-site supervision one day per month. This on-site supervision includes holding a pre-conference with the intern, a field observation, and a post-conference. Other activities of the field advisors while at the center might include:

--Videotaping the intern followed by a conference

--Arranging for the intern to observe in another center followed by a conference

--Demonstrating a teaching technique for the intern

--Reviewing the intern's lesson plans and/or plans for individual children.

To provide greater objectivity, a second field advisor makes on-site observations of the intern on a quarterly basis followed by a post-conference involving both advisors and the intern.

- Integration of Academic and Field Experiences

Field advisors are also the academic course cluster trainers. Since the courses are related to the CDA Competencies, many of the course assignments and exercises relate directly to the intern's activities with the children in the classroom. Videotapes, training portfolios, and lesson plans are shared, discussed, and critiqued in the cluster classes. Theory is related to field experiences in these discussions and also in one-to-one conferences.

- Individualization with Respect to Competencies

An initial field observation of each intern is made by the field advisor following the intern's acceptance into the program. A conference follows in which the observation is discussed and strengths and training needs with respect to acquisition of the CDA Competencies are determined. Consideration is given to past training and course work in reaching decisions about the most applicable courses for the individual. All field work is based on individual needs, rate of learning, and the demonstration of competence in the 13 Functional Areas.

- Flexible Scheduling

Each intern progresses toward acqusition of the CDA Competencies on a self-paced plan. Although academic course work is scheduled over a two-year period, a student can exit from the program whenever the CDA Competencies have been acquired. A grading system that incorporates the mark of "Incomplete" is used until courses are completed. The "Incomplete" may be removed at anytime and is not perceived as being negative.

SUMMARY

CDA training at the University of Tennessee is a joint endeavor between Head Start Supplementary Training and the State Training Office. Administered by the Division of Continuing Education, it is part of the University's comprehensive effort to further the development of Head Start training.

The training adheres to the CDA Training Criteria and also focuses on the relationship between the CDA Competencies and the Head Start Performance Standards. Field advisors, located at all five campuses of the University, are each assigned to three Head Start grantees.

- **Training of Trainers**

In addition to training interns, a "training of trainers" pilot activity for 10 local grantee advisors was initiated in 1977. The goal was for the local advisors to develop expertise in working in a supportive relationship with the CDA interns. These local advisors registered in an academic course developed around the theory of "support supervision," and were assigned to work with a CDA intern in an accompanying practicum. They met as a group on a quarterly basis where they related theory to their practicum experiences.

ABSTRACT #2

ARKANSAS CDA TRAINING PROGRAM
ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY-BEEBE
BEEBE, ARKANSAS

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- Program Development and Approach

The 100 percent field-based Arkansas State University CDA training program was developed as a response to the need to individualize training and to provide supervised field experiences to interns scattered across the state. Since training also had to be based on the CDA Competencies, program officials decided not to restructure existing early childhood courses, but rather to tailor course content to each intern on-site. The training that evolved is essentially individualized on-the-job training that completely integrates academic and field experiences.

- Delivery System

The Arkansas program utilizes field advisors located in various areas across the state who are assigned CDA interns within their region. Orientation sessions, held in the fall, are arranged by each advisor within his/her geographical area. Using a ratio of one field advisor to 10 interns, the field advisor spends one day every two weeks working with each intern at his/her job site.

While the intern is working with children during the morning session, the field advisor observes, demonstrates techniques, and works cooperatively with the intern. The children's nap time is used for direct training in an afternoon session. The field advisor and intern evaluate the morning session, review and work on materials, develop assignments, and plan for future sessions. Other staff members are encouraged to participate in these afternoon sessions.

Another important aspect of the training program is assisting the interns to prepare their portfolios for CDA assessment. They must be able to select for inclusion in the portfolio appropriate materials that demonstrate both knowledge and competence in working with young children. A review of materials selected and the interns' written statements on the materials provides an opportunity for the field advisor to assess the knowledge base of the intern and determine whether additional academic experiences are required. Recently, advisors have arranged portfolio workshop meetings for interns in their geographical area.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CDA TRAINING CRITERIA

- Training Organized According to the Competencies

All training is based on the CDA Competencies and each individual's training program is designed around his/her strengths and training needs in relation to their acquisition.

One tool that both the advisor and the intern use is called a "checksheet" which has been developed for each of the 13 CDA Functional Areas. The checksheets provide methods for focusing on specific activities and topics for content discussions related to the Functional Areas. The ensuing observations and conferences help the intern prepare for the final assessment. Handouts on specific content, developed by the program personnel, are used by local advisors to meet individual needs.

- Valid Credit

Thirty (30) hours of credit are awarded on receipt of the CDA Credential. The credits are entered by course titles in the early childhood A.A. degree program at Arkansas State University-Beebe.

- Supervised Field Work

One hundred percent of the training time is spend in field experience, since all training is done at the intern's job site and deals totally with his/her actual classroom and work with the children. No outside courses or meetings are required.

- Integration of Academic and Field Experiences

The content of the training program is determined by each intern's needs as demonstrated by his/her proficiency in working on-site with children in the classroom. All training is done on-site by one advisor who guides both the academic and field experiences. Thus, there is 100 percent integration of academic and field experiences.

- Individualization with Respect to Competencies

After the intern has become familiar with the CDA Competencies and Functional Areas, he/she does a self-appraisal and the advisor does an initial appraisal. Individual training plans are then developed by the advisor and intern based on their appraisals. Each intern is provided assistance as needed to improve the level of competence. The training plan specifies the competencies to be demonstrated, the activities to be completed, and the materials to be used. Appraisals and conferences continue throughout training.

- Flexible Scheduling

Each intern is in the Arkansas program only for the period of time he/she needs to demonstrate competence. Therefore, the amount of time an intern is in the program varies; an intern exits from the training program when the intern and advisor jointly agree that the intern is ready for final assessment.

SUMMARY

The Arkansas CDA Training Program is an example of a 100 percent field-based training program funded through a university. This method of training has been well received by the participants who feel it is meaningful training based on their real life situations. Upon completion of the training and award of the CDA Credential, interns receive 30 valid university credits.

ABSTRACT #3

WESTCHESTER-ROCKLAND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
PROJECT HEAD START
ELMSFORD, NEW YORK

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Westchester-Rockland (West-Rock) Program Development Committee was formed in 1973 to provide training for Head Start personnel in two suburban New York counties. The program serves three grantees with 15 participating Head Start centers. It operates under a direct-funded Head Start training grant administered by one of the grantees.

- Program Development

CDA training for the educational staff began in 1975 with the support of the Board and Policy Council which agreed that the CDA Competencies were consistent with local program goals of providing quality care for young children.

During the first year of the CDA effort, emphasis was on training advisors. Existing Head Start supervisory personnel (i.e., Education Coordinators, Head Start Directors, and a few consultants) were trained in the CDA concept. These advisors, called Staff Development Specialists, worked on developing individual training techniques, formulating approaches to observing, appraising and promoting competence, as well as helping staff understand the dual purpose of the training--individual growth and program improvement.

At the present time, there are seven field advisors working with 32 interns.

- Staffing

The CDA program is administered by a training coordinator. This person supports the training staff (the Staff Development Specialists), designs training tools, gathers resource materials, encourages interns, acts as an auxiliary observer seeks additional funding sources, maintains statistics, hires consultant ield advisors for centers that do not have their supervisory personnel serving in that capacity, and facilitates the overall CDA training program.

Currently, seven field advisors--six Head Start supervisory staff and one consultant--work as trainers in the West-Rock CDA training program. The average advisor-intern ratio is one advisor to four or five interns. The role of the field advisor is to encourage, guide, train, and assist the intern toward the acquisition of the CDA Competencies and the award of the CDA Credential.

- Funding

The West-Rock grant provides for a three-quarter time training coordinator, a half-time secretary, a small amount of consultant time, a minimal amount of maintenance essentials, and the CDA Consortium assessment fees for candidates. Since the field advisors are Head Start supervisory personnel, no additional money is paid to them as CDA trainers. The Head Start centers receive no money, supplies, or equipment from this training grant.

- Delivery System

In addition to administrative responsibilities, the West-Rock training coordinator has responsibilities for working with the field advisor and the CDA interns. The training coordinator holds regular meetings with the advisors to provide them with the opportunity to air concerns, discuss training techniques, share materials, and develop additional programs.

The coordinator facilitates four group sessions with the CDA interns on the topics of CDA Orientation, Portfolio Development, the Role of the Parent-Community Representative, and the Local Assessment Team Meeting. These sessions are intended to:

--Help the interns feel comfortable with the training and assessment process

--Provide opportunities for the interns to share triumphs and anxieties

--Disseminate uniform information regarding CDA.

At each center, two to five classroom staff members who meet the CDA Consortium enrollment criteria with respect to age, experience, and training are identified by field advisors. Training then proceeds within the course of the field advisors' regular jobs. They begin by conducting specific and detailed observations and appraisals of the CDA interns. Private feedback conferences are held and training is individually designed and paced.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CDA TRAINING CRITERIA

West-Rock meets the CDA Training Criteria in the following manner:

- Training Organized According to the CDA Competencies

The training program at West-Rock is based on competency acquisition. Each CDA Competency is stressed and developed throughout training. The Head Start staff members enrolled as CDA interns are oriented, observed, and appraised to ensure that they are competent in the Functional Areas.

Through an individualzed program of learning, the intern works with the field advisor to acquire and demonstrate competency in the Functional Areas. The intern moves through four distinct phases during the training:

1. Phase One: Entry

   The intern is selected for entry into the training, is oriented to the CDA concept and to the assessment process, and is observed working with children. The CDA Consortium enrollment form is submitted.

2. Phase Two: Appraisal

   The intern proceeds through the training process. Field observations continue, conferences are held, the portfolio is designed, and the CDA Consortium application form is submitted.

3. Phase Three: Mid Appraisal

   The intern continues through the training process. Assignments are completed, training discussions held, and portfolio development proceeds. The CDA Consortium Readiness Form is mailed.

4. Phase Four: Final Appraisal

   The portfolio is completed, all competencies have been demonstrated by the intern in training, all CDA Consortium forms are completed, and the Local Assessment Team Meeting is held. The CDA exits from the training program.

The length of time for each phase varies for each intern and is dependent upon the individual rate of competency acquisition, the availability of the field advisors, and other variables.

- Valid Credit for CDA Training

The West-Rock CDA effort is recognized by many of the neighboring universities. One university has developed a program of modules for which 12 credits are awarded. Additionally, the same institution awards a CDA graduate up to thirty (30) undergraduate professional experience credits once he/she is enrolled in a degree program.

The training coordinator works with the universities in seeking funds to provide credit courses. When funds are available, the universities cooperate with West-Rock by providing courses at a central center location during the children's nap time, so that the training can also be available to other classroom staff members. On occasion, credit courses are offered through separate funding sources, i.e., the Urban League.

- Supervised Field Work

Because the advisors are on-site, most of the interns receive far more than 50 percent of the training time in supervised field work. The on-site advisors provide private feedback conferences based on the intern's functioning within the classroom.

- Integration of Academic and Field Experiences

There is a constant integration of academic and field work in the West-Rock program. Training plans are developed as a result of center observation and initial and ongoing appraisals. The advisor-intern team develops assignments based on the intern's demonstrated competence as well as on those academic experiences that have been agreed upon as minimal requirements for all interns.

The interns attend group sessions on CDA, complete assigned tasks, document competence, attend courses, and work with the field advisors to improve job performance. Monthly workshops, led by the field advisors, have been recently instituted as a result of common needs among the interns. These workshops are method-oriented and focus on the ongoing day-to-day classroom activities and curriculum.

- Individualization with Respect to the Competencies

Individualization occurs based on the uniqueness of each intern. Each brings to training varying degrees of competence. The intern-advisor conferences are the key to individualization as these result in the design of self-paced training programs. Each intern relates on a one-to-one basis with his/her field advisor and receives feedback according to competency level. The training plan guides the intern in recognizing personal strengths as well as areas needing additional training. Assignments, suggestions, workshops, readings, courses, etc., are recommended by the field advisor according to the specific needs, interest, and learning style of the intern.

- Flexible Scheduling

Interns in the West-Rock program take from six months to two years to obtain their CDA Credential. Each intern enters the training program with different experiences, expertise, amounts of prior effective training, and attitudes about the new learning venture. All of these variables produce the recognizable need for flexibility. Each intern is encouraged to progress only as competence is demonstrated. The advisors and interns are reminded of the program's interest in quality, not in speed of progress. The concern is with acquiring and demonstrating competence and the effect of demonstrated competence on children's lives. An intern exits from the program when he/she successfully completes the CDA Consortium assessment.

SUMMARY

The CDA training program of the Westchester-Rockland Program Development Committee operates under a direct-funded Head Start training grant and provides CDA training for three grantees. In addition to meeting the CDA Training Criteria, the West-Rock training program includes initial, ongoing, and final appraisals for each intern. Provisions are made for portfolio design and development and completion of the four-phased CDA training plan of each intern. A key feature of the West-Rock CDA program is its training and use of the existing Head Start supervisory personnel in the role of CDA trainers/advisors, known as Staff Development Specialists.

ABSTRACT #4

THE ARIZONA CDA TRAINING PROGRAM
CENTRAL ARIZONA COLLEGE
COOLIDGE, ARIZONA

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- Program Development and Approach

The Arizona CDA training program offered through Central Arizona College and developed through funding from the Administration for Children, Youth, and Families, Region IX, was designed to meet the identified needs and characteristics of Head Start classroom staff members in Arizona.

The potential training population was culturally as well as educationally diverse. Educational backgrounds ranged from little or no formal schooling to college degrees. In addition, the potential training population was made up of individuals who worked in classrooms located in a wide variety of geographical settings, including very isolated Indian reservations. Attitudes about formal education and professional advancement, as well as ideas about teaching competence, also differed markedly throughout the potential training population.

In order to meet these diverse needs, a highly individualized modular training system was developed. Its focal point is a one-to-one supportive training relationship between advisor and intern. Implemented in 1974, and reviewed and revised throughout its three years of operation, the program presently covers the entire state of Arizona, employs 40 field advisors, and serves 400 interns. Each advisor works with an average of 10 interns. The average length of training for individuals who hold full-time jobs is two to three years.

- Delivery System

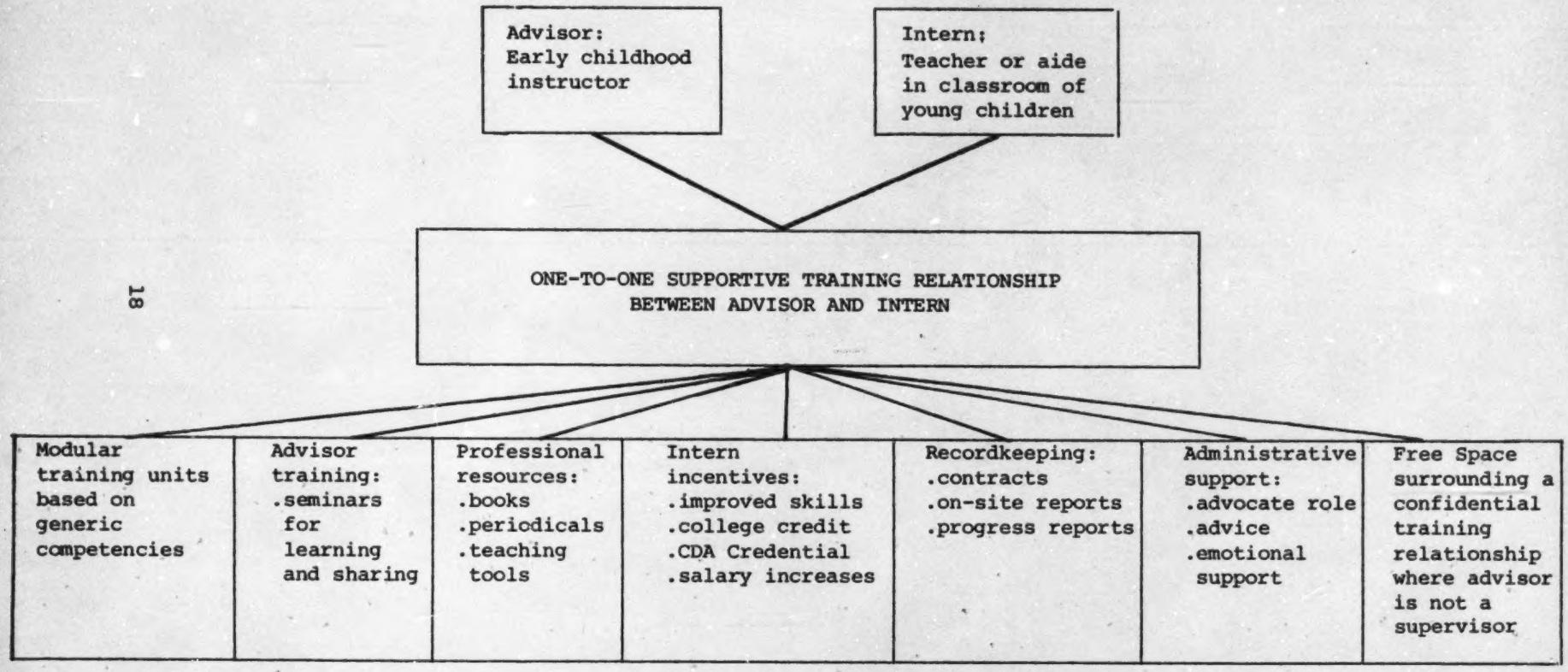
The Arizona CDA program is structured to ensure the quality of the intern's experience and to meet the college's standards of excellence without losing sight of the program's main focus--the supportive growth relationship between the intern and advisor. The Summary Chart, Figure 1, shows the support systems that were designed to provide this structure. These include: modular training units, training of advisors, professional resources, intern incentives, recordkeeping, administrative support, and "free space."

The modular training units, based on the CDA Competencies, are chief among the support systems and were developed by the advisors. There are 37 modules grouped into two or four-credit course clusters. Each module is one unit of training and is equivalent to one semester hour of college

Figure 1

CDA TRAINING AT CENTRAL ARIZONA COLLEGE

SUMMARY CHART: FOCAL POINT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS



credit. Each module contains performance objectives (written as generic competencies rather than behavioral objectives), suggested activities for the intern, as well as a study guide. Length of time required to complete a module varies from one to six weeks, according to the unique needs of each intern.

Another major support system is advisor training. This training is provided through periodic seminars that focus on new developments in the program, new ideas from the field of early childhood education, and the sharing of ideas and experiences among advisors. A "buddy" system is used in which experienced advisors orient and assist new ones.

Professional resources, including books as well as other professional literature, are available for use by advisors and interns to supplement the modules and aid in individualizing training.

The support system, intern incentives, includes college credit, attainment of the CDA Credential, job advancement, and salary increases. More intangible incentives are the self-satisfaction and growth in positive self-concept that result from improved skills.

A system of recordkeeping also provides structure to the training program. Kept at a minimum, paperwork is designed to be useful for the intern as well as the advisor. It facilitates the training by keeping the administration informed of progress in the field and by providing feedback to the training institution. The system includes individual intern contracts, on-site visit reports, and monthly progress reports.

Administrative support is provided to both advisors and interns when difficulties arise between them. It is also provided to advisors when difficulties are encountered at the field site, and to those who are isolated from other programs and/or advisors.

Free space is a support system designed to protect the confidentiality of communication between the intern and the advisor. Since the advisor is not a supervisor and has no function in the center other than training, the training relationship is protected from supervisory interference through this built-in support system.

- Staffing

The Arizona CDA training program presently employs 40 advisors. Since these advisors play a pivotal role, their careful selection is considered a critical variable to the success of the program. Advisors must have:

--Extensive practical experience in early childhood classroom settings

--Sufficient background in basic early childhood academic theory.

They must also:

--Be open and capable of assuming a support role

--Relate easily to adults and be capable of motivating them

--Be committed to open education, individualization of instruction, and capable of modeling these concepts in their relationships with interns

--Be committed to work with the program at least two years in order to ensure continuity of training.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CDA TRAINING CRITERIA

- Training Organized According to the Competencies

The 37 modules included in the CDA training program were specifically designed to address the CDA Competencies.

- Valid Credit

Interns earn college credits upon successful completion of each group of modules that comprise a course. Twelve courses totaling 30 credits are available to interns through the modular training program.

- Supervised Field Work

Since all training is done at the intern's work site, the Arizona CDA program is 100 percent field-based. The advisor's role is to guide the individual intern in his/her professional development. The advisor assumes a supportive, resource function, visiting the intern's classroom a minimum of one day every two weeks to observe, provide feedback, demonstrate teaching techniques, counsel, offer new ideas, and provide solutions to problems and access to resources.

- Integration of Academic and Field Experiences

Two factors are built into the training program to facilitate the integration of academic and field experiences. The first factor is that the academic and field experiences are provided by the same individual--the advisor. The second factor is that the modular training units include activities to be completed on-site, and an accompanying study guide to relate the academic content.

- Individualization with Respect to Competencies

Individualization is a key feature of the Arizona CDA training program, and is accompanied through the one-to-one supportive training relationship between advisor and intern. The background knowledge and professional skills

of the advisor figure importantly in the process of individualization as the single criterion for meeting module objectives is "to the advisor's satisfaction." The advisor must take the many variables affecting the individual intern's classroom situation into consideration in making judgments.

Activities are suggested within each module to help the intern develop skills in relation to the generic objective. It is not necessary, however, for the intern to complete these activities in order to earn credit. An intern who has already been observed by the advisor as being competent in meeting the module's generic objective is automatically granted credit for the entire module. If the decision is made that some activities are to be completed, these are negotiated between the advisor and intern. They may be activities that are stipulated in the module or that are suggested by either the advisor or intern.

Further individualization occurs through the sequencing of modules. With few exceptions, there is no set sequence to module completion. The personal priority and preference of the intern determine module selection.

- Flexible Scheduling

The training program is an open entry/open exit program. The intern moves at his/her own pace through the training system.

SUMMARY

The Arizona CDA training program provided through Central Arizona College serves interns representing cultural and geographical diversity. Although originally designed to serve Head Start classroom staff, the Arizona CDA program is now open to personnel in other types of early childhood programs and classroom settings.

The training program uses an individualized system of instruction that relies heavily upon the on-site expertise of its professional training staff, the field advisors. Training modules are organized around generic competencies. The focus is on the one-to-one supportive relationship between advisor and intern. The integrity of this relationship and the quality of training are maintained through a support system that encompasses modular training units, advisor training, professional resources, intern incentives, recordkeeping, administrative support, and confidentiality of the training relationship.

Thirty valid early childhood education credits are awarded through the Central Arizona College upon completion of the individually-paced training program.

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